

Date: Wednesday 19 June 2002

ALTERNATIVE SECTORS

Issue

1. To update the Committee on progress in developing strategies for the alternative sectors of Woodland & Biomass, Horticulture and Fisheries & Aquaculture.

Woodland Development and Biomass

2. The final draft of the Woodland Development and Biomass Strategy Group's action plan is at **Annex A**. The plan notes that there are considerable barriers to the development of a biomass sector in Wales, or to the management of existing woodlands for renewable energy uses, not least the need to develop existing or new markets for the raw material produced, and the need to tackle the issue of incentives for production.

3. The action plan lists 24 action points for consideration, of which ten are regarded as critical to the development of the sector. These action points are summarised in section 4 of the plan. The Strategy Group also recommends that an industry-wide steering group is set up to monitor the delivery of the action plan.

Horticulture

4. A progress report prepared by Promar International in conjunction with the Horticulture Strategy Group is at **Annex B**. The report leads to the development of a strategy for the horticulture sector for the next 5 years. It is anticipated that the strategy document will be finalised by the end of July. The Committee will receive a paper at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

Fisheries & Aquaculture

5. Although the Strategy Group was initially set up following the Scottish Agriculture College's report into the potential for alternative sectors in Wales, the development of a strategy and action plan is being taken forward separately, in conjunction with the production of an all-Wales fisheries strategy. The Committee will receive a paper on fisheries and aquaculture at a future meeting.

Action

6. The Committee is invited to note progress made to date and to comment as appropriate.